



The Jewish

Gaily Forward

Cheshvan + Kislev + Tevet 5774 ■ November + December 2013

Celebrate Sha'ar Zahav!

Sha'ar Zahav has an auspicious birthday this year. We will mark our 36th year with a **Double Chai Anniversary Party** on **November 9, 2013** at Sha'ar Zahav from 6 to 11 PM. Join us as we celebrate our community with a Double Chai extravaganza.

Chai means "living" in Hebrew and is related to *Chaim*, life! Our Torah is called *Aytz Chaim*, the Tree of Life and our toast is, of course, *l'Chaim*. In Kabbalistic numerology, the Hebrew letters that are the root of *chai*—*chet* and *yod*—add up to 18, so the number 18 is a very auspicious and lucky number. So 36 (18 times 2) is double the spirit and fun!

We will transform CSZ into a fancy nightclub with music and dancing from jazz standards to 70s funk. Think *Cabaret* and dress swanky. Kick up your heels and dance to the renowned Veronica Klaus and the Tammy Hall Trio. It'll be a fun party atmosphere with fruity signature cocktails in addition to beer, wine and soft drinks at the open bar. Enjoy a healthy and organic buffet thoughtfully prepared by caterer Gloria Swanson of Chef for Hire. Music and dance tracks will be mixed by DJ Tom Terrific, but not too loudly because, best of all, this will be an evening of shmoozing and mingling with your CSZ friends and family.

Jews traditionally give gifts and donations in multiples of 18, so purchasing a ticket for our Double Chai Anniversary Party will definitely bring luck and good fortune as well as entrance to what promises to be a wonderful party. Giving 5, 10 or 20 times the suggested ticket price will help to ensure that we can continue to meet the needs of



★ Congregation Sha'ar Zahav
presents

Double Chai Celebration

36 years!

★ *Join us in celebrating* חיי חיים

November 9 6 to 11 p.m.

Spread the Word!
Whether you dress up or dress down, this evening promises to be a joyful celebration!

An evening of visiting with our community, enjoying food and drink, and dancing.

Tickets: www.shaarzahav.org
or contact (415)861-6932



featuring

Veronica Klaus & the Tammy Hall Trio

our special spiritual community all year long. Tickets can be purchased online; go to CSZ's webpage to reserve your place at the party. You will also be able to buy tickets at the door. Bring a guest and share the celebration!

Join your friends and fellow congregants on November 9th to share a dance, a nibble or a story from when a 36-year-old CSZ was only a dream. Let's celebrate!

Does Your Character Need Improvement?



HERE'S AN abbreviated quiz from Rabbi Joseph Telushkin's list of "Questions To Determine *Where Our Character Needs Improvement*," published in *Reform Judaism Magazine*, Spring 2006:

- Am I prone to anger? When I am angry, do I overreact and say or do things that inflict pain on others? Or am I the sort of person who, if asked, will deny that I am angry, yet will treat other people with coldness, disdain and annoyance?
- Do I judge others fairly, or am I habitually critical (both in what I say and what I think)?
- Do I avoid saying or doing what I believe is right because I fear how others will react or what they will think of me?
- Do I bear grudges and remain angry at others for a long time after an argument?
- Do I jump to conclusions and blame other people before I know all the facts?
- Am I able to control my impulses, or do I give into temptation easily?
- Am I jealous of the success of others? Do I begrudge others their good fortune?

Judaism offers us a powerful system for self-improvement, not only during Elul and the Days of Awe, but all year round, every week, every day. We set out on a course but being human, we make mistakes. Being responsible for our deeds and accountable for our actions, we hopefully learn from our mistakes and have new chances to choose how we will live in accordance with our ideals.

Together these ideas add up to the possibility of character change. Judaism doesn't idealize human nature. Rather, we teach that people are born morally neutral, with a strong inclination to do wrong – but our tradition is profoundly optimistic about our ability to do better.

But how, exactly, does this happen?

In the year ahead, I will be focusing many of my teachings on the cultivation of *middot* – spiritual and ethical traits,

Reconstructionists friends might call "qualities of godliness." Each month we will study some key *middot*, such as *anavah* or humility, *kavod* or healthy self-regard, *chesed* or compassion, *emet* or truthfulness, *nedivut* or generosity, *tzedek* or justice.

Our focus on *middot* this year is not to *learn about* humility, compassion, generosity, honesty and justice; we all aspire to these qualities. Instead, our focus will be on understanding and using these *middots* to loosen, even a little, the grip of our egos – our need to be right, to put our needs first, to impress others, to "get mine."

Each of us can take on the challenge of practicing these *middot* to try to do better in some aspect of our daily lives. You may want to just take a moment now and focus on one of these qualities and commit yourself to noticing the way you might practice it today, tomorrow and throughout the year. Feel free to share with me what you are working on and to let me know how I can support you in your mindfulness practice.

For those of us for whom Sha'ar Zahav is a significant aspect of our lives, this practice gives us the chance not only to work on ourselves but to address those aspects of our community about which we kvetch most, the parts of which we are least proud. We hope to at least set a higher standard for individual and communal behavior that models these *middots*. If we succeed, even a little, then a year from now we may notice that we've actually made some progress as human beings, that we've added a little more *kedushah*, a little more holiness to our lives, our community, and our world.

Ken Y'hi Ratzon,
Rabbi Camille

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Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism, the World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews, and the San Francisco Organizing Project



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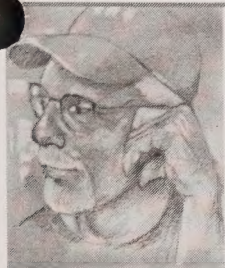
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Two Short Pieces



I. MUTUAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

ONE OF THE important features in Rabbi Angel's contract extension was the creation of the Mutual Review Committee. The committee's name

doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, so perhaps an explanation of its purpose is a good starting place. The "mutual" aspect of the name represents our commitment to being in dialogue with Rabbi Angel about defining and prioritizing the many roles of a rabbi at Sha'ar Zahav, as well as examining how the congregation supports our clergy. Dialogue contains the critical elements of listening and speaking, which is why our work is considered a mutual review.

The committee began its work at the Leadership Advance in July, and will continue for the next year. In November 2014, the committee will prepare its report to the Va'ad. In between those dates, we will meet regularly to continue the process.

There is a balance of Sha'ar Zahav experience serving on the committee: Diana Buchbinder (Past President), Ruth Bernstein (current Vice President) and Sara Haber (current Va'ad member), Alan Gordon (Ritual Committee Chair), Laura Lowe and Andy Schwartz (past Vice Presidents) and me. In addition to the insights of the members just listed, we will also benefit from the experience and advice of Rabbi Martin Weiner, who is Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Sherith Israel and Past President of the CCAR (the union of Reform rabbis).

The first few committee meetings have been quite productive, and we're looking forward to working together with Rabbi Angel in the important task of mutual review.

II. HIGH HOLY DAYS 5775

When we knew that the Herbst Theatre would not be available for our 5774 High Holy Day services, we set about locating a new venue. I don't remember how many different sites were considered. Some places were ruled out during telephone interviews. Other representatives had the right

answers over the phone, but the physical space wasn't quite right for us. Still others had the right physical space, but were difficult to reach on public transit. Then we found the Scottish Rite Masonic Center.

Its auditorium was the right size. It was convenient for public transit. There was a parking garage and almost unlimited (and un-metered) street parking. The kitchen was huge. The oneg space would accommodate table seating. There were ample spaces for the different services and the Yom Kippur breakout groups. The staff at the Scottish Rite was incredibly cooperative. It was a dream come true.

Dreams, however, can have a down side.

As we soon discovered, people with airborne allergies or bronchial conditions had bad reactions to the conditions in the Scottish Rite Auditorium. I was so disappointed to learn that some members could not remain through the High Holy Day services because of their reaction to the space. No one involved with the site selection had reacted to those conditions or experienced the problems that other members did. Although I expressed my apologies at Kol Nidre, I do want to take this opportunity to apologize again.

With regard to next year's High Holy Days, we recognize that a change is imperative. Our Administrator, Regina Wurst, has been in contact with the Scottish Rite Masonic Center to determine what the facility might do to correct the situation. Simultaneously, we will be considering alternative venues for 5775. If you have suggestions or would like to be involved with the site selection process, please email me: president@shaarzahav.org.

Join us for a special Shabbat honoring our veterans with guest speaker Dr. Rob Daroff. Friday, November 8, 7:30 pm

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Jewish Gaily Forward

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The Jewish Gaily Forward is published six times a year by Congregation Sha'ar Zahav: January 1, March 1, May 1, July 1, September 1, and November 1. The deadline for submissions is one month prior to the publication date: December 1, February 1, April 1, June 1, August 1, and October 1. All submissions to

the JGF must meet editorial and length requirements. Specifications supplied upon request.

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Volume 33, issue 3

Can Klezmer Music Make God Smile?



Larry and Martin Tannenbaum

and the joy in the room. Larry had a very infectious smile.

How can we make God smile? Certainly there are many ways. For Martin and me, one sure-fire way has been to make others happy—and all the better if it's part of the celebration of God's creation which is an inherent part of Shabbat. There's nothing like the haunting melodies of Klezmer married to the meaning and joy of prayer. Add great food, drink and dance and surely God has to smile.

Making Klezmer Shabbat an annual event has

BY ALEX INGERSOLL

During this year's Yom Kippur Mincha service, Rabbi Angel asked us to pair up and discuss some questions—among them: *What did you do in the past year that made God smile?* I found this an intriguing concept. What immediately came to mind were times in the past year—and beyond—when I did something which not only brought me pleasure, but more importantly, brought other people pleasure: The palpable joy in the sanctuary during my Bar Mitzvah, the joy surrounding us when we got married, and ... the joy in the sanctuary during the Klezmer Shabbat which followed a week later. Surely God was smiling at each of those occasions. That last event was in September 2008. We had married in Provincetown where we met, and we needed to celebrate back here in San Francisco with our CSZ community. Sponsoring a Klezmer Shabbat was an experiment we hatched with Cantor Bernstein. Little did we know that it would be the last public event attended by Martin's brother Larry before his death a month later. Throughout that evening, Larry's smile was a barometer of both his joy

Larry, his daughter Sara Rose and his brother Martin

become a way for Martin and me to cherish his brother's memory. This year, on **Friday, December 6**, Cantor Bernstein will be joined by Stuart Brotman on bass, Sheldon Brown on clarinet and Bruce Bierman on feet to transform Kabbalat Shabbat into a uniquely joyous celebration. We sponsor the evening to celebrate the memory of Larry's smile, to bring joy to our community and to give God reason to smile. We hope you'll join us this year—and see if, in the process, you will also sense God's smile.

Klezmer Shabbat, Friday, December 6, 7:30 pm



Our Next President

BY JAMES CARLSON

A few editions ago, I used my President's column to discuss the leadership dilemma at our congregation. I specifically mentioned the absence of someone in line to become president at the end of my term in July 2014. Airing the dilemma seems to have been the proper cure.

I'm pleased to announce that Laura Lowe has agreed to be nominated for the presidency. Actually, I am far more than pleased. I have known Laura for almost the entire span of my

membership at Sha'ar Zahav, and I know her to be a person of integrity and compassion. She has the intellect, resourcefulness and knowledge base to be an effective president.

Laura served as a vice president during Alex Ingersoll's term and has been active on numerous committees. Over the past few years, she has mentored a number of B'nei Mitzvah students (including teaching me trope for my Bar Mitzvah). Laura is serving on the Mutual Review Committee and will now join the Executive and Personnel Committees.

If you don't already know Laura, please take the time to introduce yourself over the next few months.

CHAVURAH CORNER

Chavurah: A circle of friends, from the Hebrew *chaver* meaning friend or companion

East Bay Chavurah

A Model for Neighborhood Gatherings

BY RICHARD WEINER

Regular attendance and participation at Sha'ar Zahav can be challenging for East Bay members because of the distance and difficulties of getting to shul.] To address this concern, about five years ago a group of East Bay members organized a chavurah that has continued to meet on an (almost) monthly basis since that time. We meet on Friday nights in members' homes, and attendance over the years has fluctuated between 10 to 25 people, usually including 5 to 10 children. Key to the success of this chavurah has been its simplicity—organizing has been spread among a core of four members, and usually just involves finding a host and sending out an invitation, with occasional phone calls when a decision needs to be made. The intimacy of meeting in people's homes and the overall sense of good-heartedness of the members have also contributed to building a sense of community among participants.

The structure of our Erev Shabbat gatherings usually includes a half hour schmooze, singing the *brachot* (blessings), sharing delicious potluck dinners, a couple of songs, a

short *drash* (teaching) on that week's *parsha* (Torah portion) with a few thoughtful questions about how it relates to our lives (at which point the children usually disappear into another room), breaking into groups of two to talk, and regrouping for a general discussion before concluding with a song—all of this between 6 and 9 pm.

Some of the challenges we've faced have been accommodating the divergent needs of members with and without children, finding hosts with sufficient lead time, and striking the right balance between schmooze time and structured discussion.

While some of the meetings have led to very powerful sharing among members, most of the time we just enjoy seeing each other and having a relaxed and meaningful way of starting off our weekend with a warm Shabbat glow. We believe that our organizing model could be valuable for similar geographic/neighborhood based chavurot in other parts of the Bay Area, and would be happy to share our experiences with anyone interested in organizing a CSZ chavurah in their neighborhood.

In each issue of the JGF, we will feature an article about one of our chavurot. A CSZ Chavurah is a group of Sha'ar Zahav members with shared interests who meet on a regular basis to enrich their lives by socializing, learning, and celebrating Jewish life together. If you have an idea for a chavurah you'd like to be a part of, please contact the Connections Task Force at connections@shaarzahav.org.

For more information about the East Bay Chavurah, please contact Kim Haveson at kimhaveson@gmail.com.

A Blessing For Our Table

BY PAULA FLEISHER

Every year the Sha'ar Zahav's b'nei mitzvah cohort bestows a special gift on the congregation as a legacy and remembrance of their final year of formal learning at Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer. The lively and inquisitive BSPM Class of 2013 decided it was time to make our Shabbat candle lighting brighter and more inspirational.

With its hand-painted *hamsas* (palm-shaped amulets) and

trees on silk squares appliqued on a serene linen background, our bima's new tablecloth was the result of the collective artistic efforts of the class under the guidance of mavens Rena Frantz (silk painting) and Barbara Cymrot (embroidery and more).

It's the wish of the children that our new cloth remind us of the gift of learning that is bestowed on us from generation to generation every year – incisive interpretations of Torah, beautiful melodies, piercing questions for Rabbi Angel, and the blessing of lit candles.

Giving a Gift to Yourself— On Being a Mentor

BY JUDY SCHWARTZ

There are many wonderful things about membership at CSZ but on the top of my list is the opportunity to grab the best volunteer job in the world – being a bar/bat mitzvah mentor!

What is the best thing about being a mentor?

Not only is it fun, inspiring, energizing and thought-provoking, but think of this: How many activities are there that can yield this kind of return on investment?

When asked why they love being a mentor, mentors responded:

- *For me, it's many years later when I run into my student, often at High Holy Days or even on the street, who may have returned from college or is now in the workforce. The hug and enduring connection is very real. I know the student (now an adult) feels proud to have had a bar/bat mitzvah and finds the work and discipline he/she put in at age 12/13 to have been well worth it.*
- *It's a great way for us older folks to engage with the younger generation and help to create a connection for them with the Jewish community.*
- *The growth that kids exhibit between pre-teen and teen years is phenomenal and wonderful to see. Experiencing it first hand is a gift and a blessing.*
- *The meaningful relationship that you build with the mentee. It is the living example of l'dor v'dor (generation to generation) and the transmitting of Torah.*

Wondering how you can be a part of this?

We mentors are a diverse group. We are single, we are married, we are parents, we are not, we are from all over the Bay Area, and there is no minimum or maximum age requirement. All you need is this:

- ☐ A desire to experience all of the above
- ☐ A willingness and ability to make a time commitment of about two hours a month for six months, followed by four hours a month for a year (more or less)
- ☐ The ability to read Hebrew and some knowledge of the Shabbat service
- ☐ A willingness to learn along with your mentee

Our CSZ Mentor program takes the notion of “it takes a village to raise a child” and puts it into operation. Our CSZ Mentor program is relatively unique in the congregational world. It is an initiative that nourishes our community and helps to sustain our congregation. This is a model program that works on so many different levels – building community, educating, making good use of our internal resources, giving congregants opportunities for connection and so much more. I am grateful to be a part of it.

In the words of our educator Rebecca Weiner:

Just do it! There are few opportunities for doing a mitzvah that brings you such joy and *naches* (pride)!

To become a mentor, contact Rebecca Weiner at rebecca@shaarzahav.org.

Teaching Holiness at Beit Sefer



THE SUBJECT OF this unit in our Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer curriculum is holiness. Holiness is one of those elusive subjects that is often difficult to translate for students. The notion of *kedushah* (holiness), however, is a central element of our Jewish tradition, and Judaism gives us a way around the subjectivity of what makes a “good person” by directing us toward good actions. In much of Judaism, holiness is informed by *halacha* (Jewish law), which defines “holy” by telling us what we can and cannot do. Holiness is an abstract concept, but our tradition teaches us that if we follow the *mitzvot* (commandments), we will be good people and be able to live more fully as *Betzelem Elohim* (in the image of G-d).

I often ask students, “When have you experienced a holy moment?” Usually they speak about some moment of joy or a

moving experience in nature. I don’t discount the holiness in these times, but the truth is, the business of holiness is hard work. Yes, holiness can be found in the exhilarating moment of singing out the *Barchu* on a mountain top, but more often holiness comes when you are fulfilling some mitzvot and you really don’t want to.

On Yom Kippur, as we sat with our stomachs grumbling after the children’s services, many parents commented that fasting was made more difficult because they still had to make breakfast for their children. I missed an opportunity at the time to talk about how this increased the holiness of their mitzvot. I want our students to have a framework for holiness that implies effort. I want them to understand that many of the holiest moments in their lives will be defined in some ways by difficulty.

Another hallmark of holiness in Judaism is that we make time holy. Shabbat is our shining example (continued on page 14)

Introducing the B’nei Mitzvah

Jacob Greenberg-Bell

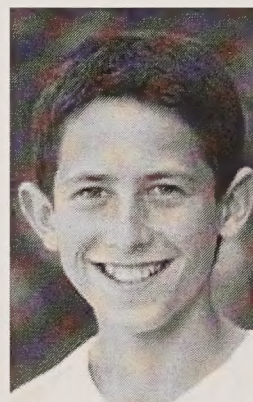


On November 23, 2013, Jacob Greenberg-Bell will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah.

Jacob is a 7th grader at Park Day School in Oakland. In addition, to school (and homework), Jacob has many interests and activities. He is passionate about soccer – playing as much as he can and watching his favorite team, Chelsea, whenever possible. In addition, he enjoys playing guitar, listening to music, cooking, watching movies, reading, and hanging out with his friends and family. Jacob loves to laugh and make others laugh.

Jacob’s mitzvah project has been helping to serve meals for the homeless at Congregation Beth El in Berkeley and working at the Food Bank. He has attended Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer since kindergarten where he has had many wonderful teachers. Jacob and his parents, Judith Bell and Jim Greenberg, would like to thank his Hebrew teachers, Rebecca Weiner and Joel Siegel, and his wonderful mentor, Judy Schwartz for all their guidance and support.

Ro’e Zaid



A member of CSZ from birth, Ro’e is a seventh grader at Contra Costa Jewish Day School in Lafayette. He loves baseball and played on the Little League Majors last spring as a right fielder and third baseman for the NOLL/SOLL Red Sox. He looks forward to playing again this year in the Juniors. When he’s not outside fielding grounders, he’s keeping up with Oakland A’s and SF Giants baseball with an eye toward a promising post-season. He and

his little brother Gil’i share a budding baseball card collection.

Ro’e will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on December 7, 2013. His mitzvah projects have focused on helping his community schools. Last year, he led the student team that earned Contra Costa Jewish Day School its EBMUD Water Smart certification. He served this summer as a “Garden Angel” sustaining the Chabot Elementary School’s community garden through the summer months, and he has contributed his time to younger students in the classroom at Chabot. A devoted Kee Tov camper, Ro’e shared his *ruach* (spirit) this summer with two tiny kindergarten buddies, both named Isaac, and he looks forward to becoming a Kee Tov counselor.

He and his family would like to express their special thanks to his bar mitzvah mentor and baseball buddy Ali Cannon, and to our wonderful educator and neighbor Rebecca Weiner. Their bar mitzvah preparations would not be possible without the help of Cantor Bernstein, Rabbi Angel, Ora Prochovnik, Paul Cohen and Justyn Lezin, the musicians of *Gay Iz Mir* and the amazing families of the 2013/14 B’nei Mitzvah Chavurah.

Recipes and Stories

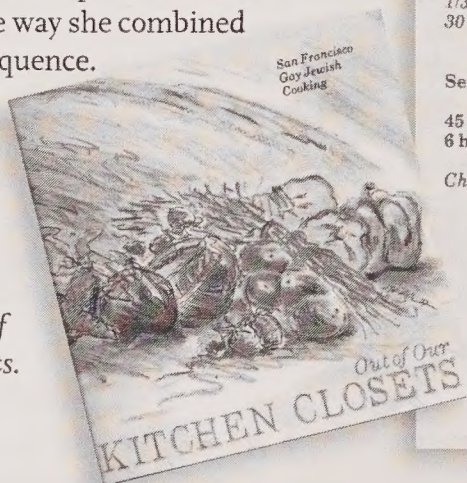
Cheryl Orvis z"l 1948-1988

Cheryl was president of our congregation in 1982. She was a brilliant leader and thinker who guided us through difficult times and inspired us to purchase our first building on Danvers Street.

She is remembered by many of us by the warmth of her friendship, the breadth of her generosity and the way she combined frankness and eloquence.

She also had a wicked sense of humor—and loved a good English Trifle!

This is her recipe from *Out of Our Kitchen Closets*.



188 DESSERTS

TRIFLE ORVIS

1 package Bird's Custard Mix
2 tablespoons dark rum
2 1/4 cups whipping cream
2 tablespoons sugar
3 tablespoons red raspberry preserves
1 10-inch round sponge cake
1/4 cup brandy
1/3 cup dry sherry
30 large, whole strawberries

Serves 14 to 18

45 minutes to prepare
6 hours in refrigerator

Cheryl Orvis

My mother's family are English Jews. When I would go there for a visit, there was much excitement and visiting of relatives and their friends and neighbors, most of whom I had come to know well over the years. Because trifle is a beautiful dish (both aesthetically and taste-wise) and so "typically English," I was served trifle everywhere, it seemed. I cannot describe how many variations of trifle I have eaten over the years. This is my mother's version, adapted to American ingredients.

- Prepare Bird's Custard according to package instructions. Stir in rum. Chill mixture thoroughly.
- Combine all but one cup of the whipping cream with one tablespoon of the sugar and whip until cream is stiff.
- Coat the inside of a deep ten-inch glass bowl with raspberry preserves to within an inch of the rim. Slice the cake horizontally into four layers. Place the top slice, crust side up, in the bottom of the bowl.
- Combine the brandy and sherry. Sprinkle the cake layer in the bowl with one-fourth of the liquor mixture (about two tablespoons). Spread one-third of chilled pudding mixture over that layer.
- Repeat with two of the three remaining cake layers, sprinkling each with liquor and topping each with pudding.
- Arrange fifteen strawberries evenly on the top layer of pudding. Cover with the remaining cake layer, crust side down. Sprinkle with the remaining brandy and sherry mixture.
- Whip the remaining cup of cream with one tablespoon of sugar until stiff. Place the whipped cream in a pastry bag with a fluted tip. Make twelve mounds of whipped cream around edge of bowl and three mounds across the diameter. Top each mound with a strawberry.
- Chill for at least six hours. Scoop out and serve on dessert dishes.

FAMILY LAW

PRACTICE AREAS

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Pension
Distribution
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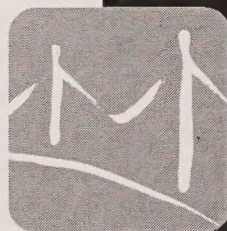
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Restraining

Orders
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Disputes
Modification
of Orders
Appeals

▼
We recognize that a Family Law matter is one of the most difficult challenges that you may face—whether in a traditional or alternative family setting.

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Adult Education with Our Clergy

Lattes & Liturgy

with Cantor Sharon Bernstein

Saturday October 12, November 16, January 11, February 22,
March 8, April 5, 10:15-11:15 AM

May 10 11:15-12:15 (as part of Shabbat Simcha)

Want to learn more about prayer while drinking your morning brew? In this new study and discussion group, we will look at some of the structures and styles of Jewish liturgy and the siddur; unpack and delve into the meanings of individual words and prayers; and together explore ways in which the language and ideas can be understood and experienced by us in our modern times. Good coffee and eats provided.



Awakening Through Chant, Walking Meditation, Writing and Nature

with Rabbi Camille Shira Angel

Saturday, December 14, 2 pm

Meet at Sha'ar Zahav

Shabbat/Saturday afternoon we will practice walking meditation, taking steps mindfully and deliberately, praying for wisdom and for guidance, for truth and clarity of vision on this Shabbat and beyond. Please note: we will be outside for some of this session, encountering and contemplating our relationship with the natural world.

Judaism and Recovery

If you are looking to grow along Jewish spiritual lines, seeking progress not perfection, please join me weekly for an hour of coffee, conversation, text study and mindfulness practice. Interested in forming a group? Please email: Rabbi-camilleangel@gmail.com

Upcoming Programs in November and December

Saturday, 11/2, 10:15 am,

Meditation Chavurah

Friday, 11/8, 7:30 pm,

Shabbat honoring our
veterans

Saturday, 11/9, 6 pm, Double

Chai Anniversary Party

Wednesday, 11/13, 7 pm,

Va'ad meeting

Saturday, 11/16, 10:15 am,

Lattes & Liturgy with
Cantor Bernstein

Sunday, 11/17, 7 pm, "Israel and

Iran: A Common Heritage"
presentation by Professor

William O. Beeman

Friday, 11/22, 6 pm, Friday

Night Live for young families

Wednesday, 12/4, 6 pm,

Family Chanukah Celebration

Friday, 12/6, 7:30 pm,

Klezmer Shabbat

Saturday, 12/7, 10:15 am,

Meditation Chavurah

Wednesday, 12/11, 7 pm,

Va'ad meeting

Saturday, 12/14, 2 pm,

Awakening Through Chant,
Walking Meditation,
Writing and Nature
with Rabbi Angel

What it Means to Me to Bring Food to Kever Avot v'Imahot

BY LYDIA ZINN

At this year's annual visit to Sha'ar Zahav's cemetery, we asked long-time potluck participant Lydia Zinn why she always brought food to this event. This is what she said:

Tollowing a recipe is very reassuring, maybe because it results in something tangible. Food preparation involves transformation. Who isn't fascinated by that? Although I enjoy listening to music in the kitchen, there's also a meditative quality to time spent there which is truly satisfying. A meal of consolation for mourners is traditionally offered in the home rather than the cemetery, and so schlepping food there could be perceived as pretty edgy in certain circles. My father

took great delight in preparing food for guests, especially fish he had either caught, or food grown in our backyard. At his table you felt it was his honor to serve you. Have the role of preparing food helps me to simply show up. For all of these reasons, believe me when I say it's my pleasure to bring food to our annual gathering at Sha'ar Zahav's cemetery.

Today it's customary for prospective students to tour a college campus before enrolling. I like to see our gathering for Kever Avot v'Imahot at Hills of Eternity in that spirit. It's an opportunity to get the feel of the grass underfoot and think: someday I'll begin the leg of my journey that I know *gornisht* (nothing) about. So I pause. I reflect on the people who journeyed before me. During this time together, I can see the staggering loss that each of us lives with as well as the buoyant resilience of the people around me.

Thanks to All our High Holy Days Volunteers! We couldn't have done it without you!

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...and anyone whose name we inadvertently left out.

Our Legacy Community

Robber Barons, Sha'ar Zahav, and You

BY LARRY WEXLER

I remember in high school learning about the famous American robber barons. We still see names such as Vanderbilt, Carnegie, Rockefeller, Morgan, Crocker, Stanford, and others in some of the structures and establishments of American life. I don't remember much of what I learned about them some forty or so years ago, but there is one concept that somehow I connected with them. It has stuck with me over the years. I wish I could give its attribution and express the thought in the words its robber baron author used, but I'm at a loss as to who first said it, or with what fine-tuned turns of flowery late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century speech he must have initially laid it out. I just have the core idea, which is this: the purpose of money is to give it away to make the world a better place.

I imagine it is really a little more than just that. Perhaps it is really more along the lines of first taking care of one's needs, of one's family and loved ones, the communities and institutions one cares about, and then giving the rest away. Maybe the "giving the rest away" part is for the communities and institutions one cares about. This is the understanding that I like: to see to your own needs and those of your loved ones and family, and to the communities and institutions that matter to you. In that way, you make the world a better place. Of the communities and institutions that matter to me, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is among those at the top of my list.

We all have a CSZ link, a story, a reason, a connection, a history, an answer to the question, "Why am I here?" (Not the existential "here" as in alive on planet Earth at this time and place, but the more local "here" at CSZ.) Maybe it's as basic as it's the nearest synagogue to your home. Maybe it's as deep as this is where you most feel the presence of the Holy One of Blessing. Maybe it's where your friends are. Maybe it's where you're looking for that special one or those special ones. Maybe it's because you're one, and here it's ok to be one. Maybe it's a sense of the LGBTQ history in these walls, or it's a sense of the Jewish history in these walls, and the intersection of those two powerful historical currents. Maybe it's the opportunities of participation, growth, and service you find here. Maybe it's our phenomenal rabbi or outstanding cantor, or our wonderful and amazing corps of lay service leaders. Maybe it's our beautiful and inspiring siddur, and the acknowledgement, love, and acceptance that seep out of its pages. Maybe it's our incredible Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer religious school, or our unbelievable program of b'nei mitzvah mentoring. Maybe it's one of the warm and loving places you and your family (made of up whatever magical constellation of spouse, partner, husband, wife, child or children it



may be made up of) have found. Maybe it's that here you're among others of similar circumstances and doesn't that feel nice!

Your link, your connection, your answer to the "why am I here" question may be somewhere in there. Or it may not be; my list is not a complete one. Our links are personal, our stories are our own, and one's not necessarily going to be same as another's. It doesn't really matter what it is as long as it is true for you. As for me, I want to do what I can to make sure that, for the next person who finds and identifies that link, personal answer or special connection, the congregation will be here in strength and certainty. I want to do what I can to make sure it's true for the next person tomorrow, the next day and forever.

For that reason, I have chosen to participate in the CSZ Our Legacy Community program. This is the program by which you would designate the congregation as a beneficiary of your will, life insurance policy, or other assets. You can find out more about the program on the CSZ website.

You don't need to have the resources of a robber baron to participate in the Legacy program. You simply need to call to mind your link, your answer, your reason for being here, for being part of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, and you need to want that to continue. You also need to complete a Letter of Intent to participate in the CSZ Our Legacy Community Program. For information on how to do this, please contact CSZ's Legacy Chair, Irene Ogus at irene.ogus@gmail.com or by phone at 415-305-4286. I thank you, and future generations of Sha'ar Zahav thank you as well.

Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer

Rabbi Angel

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Florence & Steven Nacamulli to the Chevra Kadisha Fund in memory of Jan Haber, mother of Sara Haber and mother-in-law of Beth Sousa.

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Avraham Giannini in memory of Jan Tuzzolino, mother of James Carlson.

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In honor of Lil Prince's 90th Birthday.

General Fund

Allan Berenstein in memory of Jan Haber, mother of Sara Haber and mother-in-law of Beth Sousa.

Jay Cohen in honor of the Caregivers Group.

Paul Cohen in memory of Jan Haber, mother of Sara Haber and mother-in-law of Beth Sousa.

Marga & David Dusedau in honor of Michael Chertok's birthday.

Joss Eldredge for the Rabbi's Elul classes in August.

Steven Elman & Tom Holt in memory of Jan Haber, mother of Sara Haber and mother-in-law of Beth Sousa.

Anna & Josh Katz in honor of the yahrzeit of Alice Katz, Josh's mother.

Kim & Justyn Lezin-Haveson for Friday Night Live.

Mark Lipsitz

Mark Pressler in honor of Ora Prochovnick.

Ora Prochovnick & Rena Frantz in memory of Jan Haber, mother of Sara Haber and mother-in-law of Beth Sousa. In honor of Todd Ormsbee's Welcoming.

Sharyn Saslafsky in memory of Jan Haber, mother of Sara Haber and mother-in-law of Beth Sousa.

Susan Tubbesing in memory of her grandmother, Laura Bezman.
in memory of her cousin, Phyllis Cohen.
in memory of her aunt, Doris Bezman.
and in memory of her mother-in-law, Pearl Nathe, on the occasion of their Yahrzeits.

Jon Uyerlinde

Ami Zusman in memory of Jan Haber, mother of Sara Haber and mother-in-law of Beth Sousa.

High Holiday Donations

Anonymous thanks to James Carlson for his service to our community.

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Ann Bauman & Kelly Theimann (Kol Nidre machzor printing) in memory of Ann's father, Paul Bauman.

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Hilda Rosenfeld in memory of the yahrzeit of her brother, David Rothenberg.

Judith Wolfe in memory of Jan Haber. In appreciation of the Caregivers group, Rabbi & Kim.

Rainbow Fund

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The Lahn-Schroeder Family in honor of the Congregation's 36th anniversary.

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Shoshana Levenberg & Andrea Guerra in honor of Barbara Guerra & Marion Levenberg.

Jeffrey Lilly in honor of Rabbi Angel.

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Oneg sponsored by Alice Harron, *in honor of the leaders of the week's Shabbat services*

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Flowers sponsored by Harry Bernholz's aunts and uncles *in honor of his bar mitzvah and in memory of his grandmothers*

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Saturday Kiddush luncheon sponsored by Peter Bernholz and Leon Fleischer, proud grandfathers, *in honor of Harry's bar mitzvah*

August 24

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August 30-31

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Friday Night Live Dinner sponsored by the Vanessa and Alison Jacoby family

Welcome to New & Returning Members (as of October 1, 2013)

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Teaching Holiness

(continued from page 7)

of that. What makes Shabbat holy is the intention we bring to it. Shabbat teaches us that it can be as much the "not doing" as the doing that can heighten holiness in our lives. This notion of stopping, of unplugging is one of the most difficult aspects of truly guarding the Sabbath.

These three elements—the *kavanah* (intention), the letting go and the distinguishing—all make the pursuit of holiness a very thoughtful endeavor. This is how it should be. Holiness should not be something that is easily achieved and flippantly mastered. I hope that when contemplating holiness our students (and families) will think about how to ratchet up each of these elements in their Jewish lives. I think my students understand the notion of "no pain, no gain" in their academic and athletic lives, but I feel it is still elusive in their spiritual lives.

Our young people are living in a strange time where they are saturated with technology, and their literature, movies and video games are often fantastical fairy tales full of magic and the supernatural. Now I have no problem with magic, and anyone who knows me knows I would love to have a sabbatical teaching potions at Hogwarts. However, the holiness that I hope is present in the lives of my students is not evoked from a magic wand or practiced in virtual space. It is the simple act of pushing ourselves further to do the right thing, extend ourselves further for our community and show up in real time to help those in need. The blessing and the challenge of practicing a Judaism that falls outside the exacting strictures of Jewish law is that we have to discern for ourselves which mitzvot will bring us close to holiness. I hope that my students will learn that the holiest acts are the simplest, which forever leave a mark in our souls helping us to distinguish between the sacred and the profane.

Condolences

Our condolences to:

The family of Betty Cottin Miller, mother of our member, Jeffrey A. Miller, z"l, and long-time sponsor of our Scholar-in-Residence weekends

Evan Richards on the death of his grandmother, Lisalotte Richards

Sophie Macks on the death of her grandfather, Morton Macks

Sara Haber and Beth Sousa on the death of their mother and mother-in-law, Jan Haber

The Rawlings-Fein family on the death of their friend, Caleb Hollander Sande

Family and friends of our member, Arnie Jackson

Itai and Tali Bojdak-Yates on the death of their great-grandmother, Josephine Bojdak

Naches

Mazel Tov to:

Bobbi Lopez and Mika Cade on their marriage

Todd Ormsbee on his welcoming into the Covenant

Pamela Erwin on her welcoming into the Covenant

Member Yahrzeits

November

- 3 Forrest Kincade
- 7 Donald Albert
- 11 Bruce Apter
- 11 Matthew Rostoker
- 12 Dr. Richard Wright
- 13 Harvey Levine
- 16 Chuck Norton
- 22 Tristano Palermino
- 27 Harvey Milk

December

- 4 Marilyn O'Keeffe
- 9 Nicholas Papadopoulos
- 18 David Glassberg
- 20 Norman D. Kramer
- 21 Walter Palmer
- 22 Elijah M Silverrod MacLachlan
- 28 Phyllis Mintzer
- 29 Allan Craig

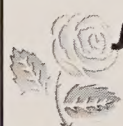
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